

# The Christian News-Letter

*Edited by*  
KATHLEEN  
BLISS

30th April, 1947

THE NATIONAL SERVICE BILL which passed its second reading at the beginning of this month affects, as the Minister of Defence said in the debate, every home in the country, and raises far-reaching human issues. The British nation has for the first time in its history committed itself to conscription in times of peace. The absence of conscription on the continental model has been one of the features which has characterized the free society in Britain of which Mr. Middleton Murry writes in the Supplement to this News-Letter. Christians ought not to be able to view with complacency the handing over of the nation's young men at a most impressionable age to do the bidding of the state for a year, or to accept the use by the state of a power of compulsion, new in peace time, without asking on what path the nation's feet are set.

## RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In seeking light on these questions this News-Letter will take as its main thread the two days' debate in the House of Commons on the National Service Bill.

Like all fundamental political decisions the question of national military service has both a political and a religious aspect, and the two while inevitably intertwined need to be kept distinct.

### NEWS-LETTER

CONSCRIPTION

### SUPPLEMENT

THE FREE SOCIETY

BY

J. MIDDLETON MURRY

There are those for whom refusal to participate in war or undertake military service is a religious absolute. This point of view was represented in the debate and in the division lobby. It is represented in all the Churches. The Society of Friends has advocated and practised this attitude with undeviating consistency, and the Meeting for Sufferings, its executive committee, anticipated the action of the Government by a minute expressing its deep concern about the continuance of conscription and protesting against it.

The Christian News-Letter has always tried to maintain the distinction between two different things. The one is the decision of the individual Christian not to participate in war, which as an act of conscience has to be treated with respect, and was so treated by the Government during the war by the unconditional or conditional exemption of those whose conscientious objections were held by tribunals to be genuine—provisions which are retained without substantial change in the new bill. The other is the insistence by certain sections of the public, including some Christians, that the *nation* should refuse to participate in another war, and therefore logically disarm and abandon conscription.

In a pamphlet *What do you think of War and Conscription?* by Bernard Canter,<sup>1</sup> the case on religious grounds against individual participation in war is stated with a sincerity, persuasiveness and perception of the real difficulties that must make their appeal to every Christian mind. Those who hold these views have every right to allow their political actions to be guided by them, and in their capacity as citizens to exert themselves to defeat conscription. It is another matter when the attempt is made, as in an article in *The Friend* (March 21st, 1947), to invest a political campaign against conscription with a specifically Christian sanction, and when the religious objections to war are mixed up with dubious political arguments. No political cause is as pure as it often seems to Christian idealists. Those who oppose conscription do so, as the article recognizes, for “a variety of reasons”. Once Christians enter the political arena they

<sup>1</sup> Friends Peace Committee, Friends House, Euston Road, N.W. 1.  
Price 3d.

have to make shift with strange bed-fellows. Not only moral conviction, but popular ignorance, lethargy, individual and sectional selfishness, and political irresponsibility all play a part in the ultimate decision taken by the nation on conscription. But clear recognition of the complex mixture of religious and non-religious elements in the discussion of conscription does not mean that there are no points of pressing concern to Christians. Three may be singled out for mention.

### THE THREAT OF WAR

The argument advanced in the debate that conscription in peace time is a breach with our national tradition, and must for this reason be opposed is without force. It would be as sensible to object to traffic lights on the ground that we did without them before the coming of the motor car.

Recourse to conscription is an act of choice in which we acknowledge as a nation the hideous situation in which we find ourselves, and accept the fact that we are involved in a new way in the fate of Europe and of the world, and that the freedoms which we enjoyed as a privileged island nation with an all-powerful navy are no longer ours.

The situation is hideous because war, if it comes, will be war with atomic and bacteriological weapons. Every one knows what happened at Hiroshima. Far worse is now possible. The thing that ought most to concern Christians is not so much the unimaginable horrors that will be visited, if war comes, on our own cities and on those we love, but the fact that in waging war by modern methods we shall be guilty of the unspeakable sin in the sight of God of large-scale, ruthless and indiscriminate slaughter and torture of our fellow human beings.

The Commission on the Era of Atomic Power recognized<sup>1</sup> that when war becomes an affair of mass destruction, all the restraints in waging it which have been regarded by the Christian tradition as essential to a "just" war disappear. The question is one which concerns not Christians alone but humanity as a whole. Unless naked power can be subjected

<sup>1</sup> Report, p. 51, S.C.M. Press. 28.

in some degree to moral control, men are in a fair way to becoming dehumanized. No one has seen this more clearly than Lewis Mumford in his *Programme for Survival*.<sup>1</sup> "We have dehumanized ourselves and no longer accept any limitations, inner or outer, upon our will-to-annihilation. . . . Our moral nihilism has brought us down to the level of Gengliz Khan."

The greatness of our moral danger is concealed from us by the inveterate tendency of the human mind to incarnate evil in an opponent. The brutalities and crimes of the Germans most certainly cry to heaven. But it is the British and Americans who by obliteration bombing and by the use of the atomic bomb went furthest in indiscriminate destruction and carried moral nihilism to its extreme limits. Law as a controlling principle has disappeared and, as Mumford says, "unless our moral recoil becomes equally violent there is nothing to prevent disintegration from overcoming integration." Nothing can save humanity but whole-hearted dedication to life and vehement resistance to the forces of death.

Why then shrink, many will ask, from the conclusion, which is surely obvious, that the Christian can have no part in war or preparations for war? The answer is that just because war waged with modern weapons can be nothing but man's impious defiance of God's purpose and an act of blasphemy against his creation, the obligation of the Christian is *to do everything in his power to avert war*. There can be no certainty that, political realities being what they are, a policy of unilateral disarmament is the means best calculated to prevent the outbreak of war. In the intricate game of power-politics military weakness may provide just the temptation necessary to provoke aggression.

Those whose responsibility it is to make adequate preparations for defence have to carry out their task in the knowledge that, if war comes, however just may be their cause, they will in waging it be involved in the blackest of sins. Those who on conscientious grounds oppose such preparations are on sure ground in obeying what they see as a religious absolute. But they have to live with the same

<sup>1</sup> Secker and Warburg. 3s. 6d.

knowledge that, however good their intentions, their actions may provoke the hideous calamity that they are meant to avert. All of us alike, when we reflect on the pass to which the world has been brought, must cry with St. Paul, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?"

#### CONSCRIPTION OR A VOLUNTARY ARMY

If the nation is resolved, as it undoubtedly is, to provide for its own defence and fulfil its international obligations, the choice of the best means is mainly a matter of rational judgement.

The question is, first, whether certain minimum requirements *can* be met by a system of voluntary recruitment and, secondly, whether voluntary recruitment, if it is feasible, is a more desirable way of meeting them than conscription.

The first question of the minimum numbers required is a highly technical question. It is certainly in the national interest that the proposals of the Government should be subjected to criticism in their technical aspects. But this can be done only by those who have the requisite knowledge. It is not right that a Christian and moral plea should be re-enforced, as in the article in *The Friend* already referred to, by isolated quotations from technical experts, selected because they point in a desired direction. The technicians must be left to hammer out their own conclusions in their own field. To buttress a moral plea by disputable or incomplete technical information is not a Christian procedure, and is as little justifiable as it would be to add up a sum wrong in order to advance a moral end.

In regard to the second question of the choice between conscription and voluntary recruitment, the main arguments advanced in the debate against conscription, apart from the objections of those opposed to it on principle, were first that the country in its present economic plight could not spare men from industry for the services; and, secondly, that conscription is inefficient because it is indiscriminate, enlisting both those who are suitable and those who are not. On the other side, it was contended, first, that it had been demonstrated that the numbers required could not be

obtained by voluntary recruitment, and, secondly, that conscription is the democratic way of providing for the needs of national defence, embodying the principle of equality of sacrifice and common duty. This last point, in common with every modern reference to equality, needs careful pondering.

Many of those who supported the proposals of the Government made it clear that they disliked conscription intensely, but admitted its necessity. A period immediately following a long war, when men are in reaction against service life and when there is full or nearly full employment, is not the time for passing final judgement on the adequacy of voluntary enlistment. The important thing is that public opinion should not go to sleep on the decision that has been taken or allow the continuance of conscription or its extension to other fields to take place unnoticed.

#### MILITARY CONSCRIPTION AND INDUSTRIAL CONSCRIPTION

The second of the issues raised by the present bill, which were mentioned earlier as specially deserving of our attention, is just this possibility of extension. This was vigorously discussed in the debate. Mr. Churchill maintained that it has long been recognized in this and other countries, that there is a great gulf fixed between national service for military purposes and industrial conscription, or the direction of labour, in time of peace. Other speakers insisted that the distinction was unreal, and that the logic of conscription is that every one should serve in any capacity required by the national interests. They pointed to the fact that the Government have announced that they will not call up underground coal-miners, so that coal-mining is regarded as a form of national service.

In wartime, under modern conditions of war, weapons are as vital as men and a Government has to take immediate control of the scientific, technical and industrial output of the nation, including a large measure of transference of labour. Because this takes place at the same time and for the same ends as military conscription (namely winning the war) a closer connection is seen between them than exists in the logic of organization. Judgement on important questions is not infrequently warped because they are con-

nected in people's minds with the wrong analogies and seen in a context in which in fact they do not wholly belong. This nation has made up its mind to have full employment. Gradually the implications of this decision are becoming clear. One of them is that there are a number of "unpleasant" jobs like coal-mining, foundry work, steel-rolling and forging which are highly necessary, but which an insufficient number of men are willing to do when the pressure of unemployment no longer compels them. Conscription on the military analogy is irrelevant here and introducing it into the argument only fogs the issue on one of the most important modern questions—who is to do the dirty work in a society with full employment, and how, and what part the state is to play in seeing that it is done?

#### CONSCRIPTED YOUTH

The third issue which deeply concerns us is that, when the bill has been enacted, complete control over the lives of the whole manhood of the nation will for at least a year at the most formative period of life be handed over to the Government. Every citizen whether he has supported or opposed conscription has some responsibility in the guardianship which the Government has assumed.

A very genuine concern was manifested by speakers on both sides of the House in the debate on army estimates on March 13th that the period of service should benefit and not destroy the nation's youth. Parents, school-masters and employers also, are anxious about the effect of the year's break on a boy's choice of and work for his vocation, and many are apprehensive at the thought of young men with no experience of the world being faced, possibly far from home, with moral temptations arising from their environment. So important a matter needs careful thought. We promise our readers that we will return to it and invite their co-operation in helping us to see both the problems and the opportunities which the year of military training and service presents.

*Kathleen Bliss*

# THE FREE SOCIETY

By J. MIDDLETON MURRY

SINCE I wrote the C.N.L. Supplement "Can Democracy Survive?" some months ago (No. 274), my mind has been concentrated on the problem of the free society in Britain at the present time, and I see more clearly than I did (1) its extraordinary potentialities, (2) the dangers which threaten it. It would hardly be possible to exaggerate either: and I think neither are adequately appreciated. If there is one task above all others to which Christians are called to-day, it is to spread awareness of the potentialities and the predicament of the free society at the present time.

## THE POTENTIALITIES OF THE FREE SOCIETY

I think that these are not appreciated because the nature of the free society is not understood. The direct assault upon it by Fascism and Communism, and the recent proliferation of spurious forms of "democracy", should make us acutely *conscious* of the foundations of the free society which, hitherto, we have taken for granted.

It is essential to the free society that men should be free to form an alternative government to the one in power; and this freedom can only exist where certain fundamental freedoms of the subject—freedom of speech, expression and association—are secure. But it is obvious that these freedoms cannot really be secured by legislation. They could be legally abrogated—as they are sometimes temporarily suspended—by the will of the majority. That shows plainly that they rest, not on legislation, as such, but on the moral conscience of society as a whole. We may express this truth by saying that in the free society legislation *is* the expression of the moral conscience of society as a whole. But that does not alter the fact that the whole structure rests on the moral conscience.

It is easy to miss this truth, if we say—which is true—that the free society rests on the habit of tolerance, because this obscures the fact that this habit of tolerance is or was a hard and painfully won moral achievement. Though it is a blessing that it is become a habit, we shall be courting danger if we regard it as a habit which we can take for granted, or one which we need not

scrutinize. It is quite possible that the free society, in its present position of danger, ought to refuse to tolerate the advocacy of political systems which are based on intolerance : or if not the advocacy of them, the organization of parties which seek to introduce such systems. At any rate, the time for a casual attitude of and towards tolerance is past, because altogether new strains are going to be put on the free society for which it is morally unprepared ; and much the best chance—I think, indeed, the only one—of being able to stand these strains successfully lies in the free society becoming conscious of its own nature. That means that there must be a large and quick increase in the number of the influential citizens of the free society who are fully conscious that the free society rests on the active moral conscience of its members ; and that the coming strains are such that it will require a deliberate and concerted effort of the moral will to maintain the free society.

With the establishment of political equality—the universal and equal franchise for men and women—the free society entered a new phase of existence. Whether or not that vast and sudden extension of the franchise was unwise is a matter of opinion which does not concern us : because the extension of the franchise is universally accepted complete political equality is now a datum for the free society. I call this a new phase in the development of the free society. The nature of this new phase is not easy to describe ; but its novelty is very important. In Marx's terminology, "bourgeois society" has come to an end. But what has taken its place ? Not the "socialist society", though that may be a partial description of it—and the relevance of that description will depend upon our definition of what is "a socialist society" ; but the change cannot be adequately defined in such terms. I would say rather that "bourgeois political society" is transformed into the fully free political society : fully free, of course, to go to the devil in double quick time, or to begin the slow and arduous ascent to responsible freedom.

I would, therefore, describe this change by saying that in the fully free political society, society as a whole becomes a moral personality, or enters fully upon the moral life. And I do *not* believe this is a mere metaphor ; and I think it is important to realize that it is not. So long as the fundamental freedoms are maintained in such a society, a moral conscience is always operative on the national scale. This moral conscience of society as a

whole finds its most obvious and familiar embodiment in the political Opposition. But it has many other institutional organs of expression, from the Churches downwards, to the innumerable voluntary associations for maintaining moral standards in particular provinces of the social life: e.g. the B.M.A., or the Society for the Protection of Aborigines. But none of these has the same intrinsic or symbolic significance as His Majesty's Opposition. However difficult some may find the conception of a society possessing a moral being, I think it is impossible to understand the nature of the free society, once political equality has been established *and* the common resolve to defend the fundamental freedoms is maintained, except we see it as a new kind of moral being: a new form of society which is dedicated to discovering what social justice really is, and applying it in new social institutions.

Moreover, I believe that this conception of the free society is what we have to pit equally against the individualistic and atomistic "liberalism" of the bourgeois political society which it supersedes, and against the totalitarian solidarity of the Communist social organism. It is, I think, dangerous not to press both oppositions equally: which is what Mr. Crombie fails to do in his essay "The Whole-hearted Pursuit of Social Justice" (C.N.L. No. 280). To assume, as he does, that social justice consists simply and solely in economic equality, and that Communism is the one form of society that is concerned to establish it, is to empty the idea of social justice of much of its most vital content. Political freedom is an essential part of social justice. It is even more: it is the indispensable condition of discovering, by the processes of the free society, what the real (as distinct from the ideal) content of social justice is. It could be quickly shown that the whole conception of "the Dictatorship of the Proletariat" as a means of establishing social justice is incurably vicious, and leads with absolute inevitability to a travesty of social justice, because it excludes the only means by which the proletariat can decide whether it is dictating or being dictated to.

Thus, in regard to "Socialism", it is the free society and the free society only which can discover—by its openness and receptivity to experience—what is humanly beneficial and what not in the very abstract and still largely doctrinaire idea of Socialism. The free society itself is *infinitely* more important than any "ism" that claims to benefit humanity, because it is the only means by which men can discover and declare whether they are benefited

or not. And the condition on which the free society remains this unique sensitive instrument for enabling men, in the organized social existence which is necessary to man, to discover what is really good for them, is the maintenance, at all costs, of the fundamental freedoms.

If we ask ourselves *why* those fundamental freedoms should be maintained at all costs, we may answer in two ways. We may say that the free society is self-evidently the best form of society because it enables its members to discover what is good for them and reject what is bad, as free and responsible persons ; and that the fundamental freedoms which are necessary to this form of society are, therefore, necessary to man. Or we may say that these freedoms are, in themselves, self-evidently good, because they enable men to be free and responsible persons. On which side the emphasis is put is a question of momentary convenience : for the justifications are complementary. The point is that the free society is the necessary form of social and political organization for men and women who are free and responsible persons. Therefore, I maintain that the free society is a novel, experimental and highly vulnerable form of religious—and specifically Christian—society ; and that it is urgent that this should be understood by all Christians : first, because it gives Christians common ground on which to stand in active *religious* fellowship with non-Christians, which I believe is a necessity to-day, if the free society is to be preserved *and* the radical economic crisis of the country overcome ; secondly, because the free society is, in itself, a *more* Christian society than any specifically Christian society of comparable magnitude ; and, thirdly, because I believe the future of the Christian Church itself depends upon whether the free society can be kept alive. This last point may seem unnecessarily provocative. I would not make it unless I believed it to be true, and an indication of what is at stake in the defence of the free society.

#### THE PREDICAMENT OF THE FREE SOCIETY

This can be briefly described under two heads : the domestic and the external dangers. They are distinct, but they are connected.

(a) *The Domestic Dangers.* The crux of the new situation is that while in the free society, in which there is complete political equality, we are all members one of another in a novel sense, or at least are summoned to be, the achievement of political power by the working-class (which was inevitable in such a society) has

produced a moral crisis for which neither the working-class nor anybody else was spiritually prepared. The working-class now controls the state, and the state, in the free society, is the organ of the whole community. But the working-class created the industrial organizations on which its political power is based by combining *against* the employing class: justly enough, for the employing class, by and large, had recognized no human obligation at all towards the workers; and the only way the workers could save themselves from misery and starvation was to use a situation of labour shortage to force up wages, to adopt restrictive practices and to diminish output per man in order to make the employment go round.

Now, quite suddenly, and without any moral preparation for the change, they are required to reverse their attitude. The code of conduct which has been right for a Trade Unionist for a century is now suddenly wrong. Moreover, it has been the main theme of Socialist propaganda for years that, with the advent of a Labour government, in power as well as office, the pie would descend from the sky. Hours would be shorter, pay higher: that he might have to work harder, and behave with a new sense of responsibility, was not in the picture at all.

No wonder he finds it next to impossible to adjust himself to the new situation: wherein he is required to work with a new sense of responsibility for the community as a whole, which, through his political leaders, he now controls. Even when the new situation is clarified and made comprehensible, as in the case of the coal-mines, by nationalization of a particular industry, it makes no difference; the old habits prevail, output per man is kept low, and the country is carried straight into economic crisis. Where the position is not clarified by nationalization, and the worker still appears to be working for the private employer, there is still the chance of the necessary revolution in his attitude. Yet universal nationalization is no remedy. The right combination of socialization and private enterprise has to be discovered. It can be discovered only by the free society. But what if the free society cannot exist, because it is plunged into economic crisis after economic crisis?

In pure theory, the free society should be able to stand a succession of economic crises. It would learn, by bitter experience, to impose upon its members the social discipline necessary to mitigate and finally to avert them altogether. But, in practice, can this be expected? Will the sudden lowering of our present

meagre standard of living when the dollar loans are exhausted next year really spur the free society as a whole to buckle to? Is it not just as likely that it will cause a sudden clamour for authoritarianism? We have already reached a position in which the workers frequently defy the decisions taken by their own leaders—their Trade Union leaders, and their political leaders, who are the government of the country. That leads to chaos.

So the question is: How can the new social discipline be established? And the answer is that, in the last resort, there is only one way of combining social discipline with the maintenance of the free society: that is, by the spread of anxiousness and conscience through the whole of it.

That seems Utopian; and if it is interpreted as meaning that every single member of the free society has to be conscious of his duty to the community and conscientious in performing it, it is Utopian. One has to remember that compulsion applied by the State in a free society is a form of self-limitation by free men. The question is whether such compulsion will be willingly accepted or not—met half-way; responded to as the dictate of conscience, manifest and objectified in its social form?

I do not believe that the compulsions required to maintain the free society in being will be willingly accepted unless there is a new and unprecedented effort to educate the members of the free society to their new responsibilities. That goes for everybody: for it is certainly not only the working-class which needs this education. I believe the task requires a sort of brotherhood of dedicated men and women who will, each in the sphere of his actual working life, try to embody and inculcate the new sense of social responsibility—the ethos of the fraternity, which the free society must become or cease to be free. I think, too, that it is urgent that the basic conceptions of the free society, in its new and most vulnerable phase of existence, should be made central to all teaching in our universities; and that a concerted effort should be made to arrest the subversion which is daily going on under the aegis of “intellectual freedom”, and the “scientific spirit”. Both of these, if seriously maintained, involve a prior moral commitment to the free society in which alone they are possible. In time of crisis, such as this, members of the free society have no right to propagate doctrines of moral relativism. The foundation of the free society is the validity and universality of the moral conscience. If that belief is undermined much further, the free society must collapse.

The only remedy for this is a development of the moral conscience itself. There must be a new *esprit de corps* among the intellectuals of the free society, based on a body of doctrine which makes clear that the unfettered pursuit of truth is possible only within the free society: and, therefore, that moral relativism is destructive of the free inquiry which it professes to consummate. That is to say that adherence to an orthodoxy is required of the intellectuals in the free society.

Naturally, in the purely intellectual field I do not suggest compulsion: only the conscious association of those who are prepared to accept this necessary self-limitation, and a deliberate campaign of exposure against the consciously or unconsciously subversive. But in the actual political field I suggest the time has come when the formation of political parties which advocate the seizure of power by minorities or the abolition of the fundamental freedoms should be legally proscribed.

(b) *The External Dangers.* Consideration of these arises directly out of the foregoing, for one of the principal ways in which the free society is being undermined is by presenting the activities of Soviet Russia to the British public as entirely justifiable and laudable, whereas they are as opposed to the morality of the free society as those of Nazi Germany itself. The contention that there ought to be a greater affinity between Britain and Russia than between Britain and U.S.A. because Britain and Russia are now both "socialist" countries, while U.S.A. is capitalist, has very considerable support among Labour members of Parliament. This specious argument is based on the assumption that "socialism" in a free society, and "socialism" in a totalitarian society are the same thing. They are generically different and diametrically opposed to one another. And the mentality of politicians who refuse to admit this is, whether wittingly or not, corrupted. If they should exert any influence—however negative—on the foreign policy of the Labour government it will be a bad influence, tending to the further weakening of the free society.

Soviet Russia, both by its philosophy and its practice, is the most formidable enemy that the free society has ever had or ever will have to encounter. The philosophy of Marx-Leninism is based on an explicit and categorical denial of the validity of conscience and the objectivity of the moral law. The practice of Stalinist policy conforms exactly to this philosophy. It pushes naked power just so far as it will go.

Between Soviet Russia and the free societies, I believe, a relation of mutual trust is quite impossible so long as the Russian philosophy and the political organization (which is bound up with the philosophy) have not undergone a radical change. That is, in itself, a highly dangerous situation. It is much more dangerous because the Russian philosophy is a fanatical and proselytizing religion which, wherever it spreads in the free societies—whether by making open converts or by persuading “fellow-travellers”—*pro tanto*, destroys the basis of the free society by annihilating or paralysing conscience, and destroying all real belief in the *objectivity of the moral law*.

To recognize clearly the absolute opposition between Communism and the free society is essential; to translate it into appropriate political action very difficult. For the clear opposition which exists between the doctrine of Communism and the doctrine of the free society, and indeed between the Communist society and the functioning free society, becomes unclear when countries are in question in which the conditions essential to the free society—the habit of tolerance, and the practice of freely forming an alternative government—do not exist, and never have existed. In such countries Communist control may be better than any practicable alternative. But even here it is dangerous to generalize. Jugoslavia, Bulgaria and Roumania may have benefited; Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia may have suffered. Probably the truth is that the nearer Communism advances to the heart of Western Europe, the more retrogressive it becomes.

The great difficulties in the way of a coherent and morally principled policy towards Russia in European affairs are due chiefly to the abandonment of the principle of the self-determination of nations. That principle was abandoned, because as it was applied, it was unworkable; and it was unworkable because it contradicted the necessary principle of any international organization which could have maintained it. Limitation of national sovereignty was in fact the indispensable corollary of the application of self-determination as a universal principle.

That gives a clue to the kind of policy the free societies need to follow *vis-à-vis* Russia. They should aim at forming “a free society of free societies”, which any nation is free to join if it upholds the fundamental freedoms. The difficulties are great and obvious. Perhaps President Truman’s message to Congress marks a stage on the way thither. America begins to stand forth

in a protective relation to the self-determined societies analogous to that in which Russia stands to the "satellite" countries. Russia will regard that as the prelude to the Capitalist-Communist Armageddon which she dogmatically believes to be inevitable. That belief is false. But it tends to create its own fulfilments, and in the meantime an unstable and dangerous equilibrium of power.

This can be stabilized only by the creation of an international organization for the abolition—as distinct from the avoidance—of war. This is the issue on which the moral offensive against Russia should be taken; and it should be pressed home in connection with Russia's virtual rejection of the otherwise unanimous recommendations of the Atomic Energy Commission. It is imperative that the political offensive against Communism should be based on clear moral principle. The only one that is free from equivocation is the necessity of the abolition of war. That lifts the issue clear above the uncertain question whether or not Communist control is, on balance, to the benefit of the Balkan peoples.

These are merely suggestions in the field of international policy. Though I attach importance to them, I do not claim to be wholly convinced about them. But about the necessity of the free society becoming conscious of its dependence on the validity of conscience, I am wholly convinced. The crucial question to my mind is, whether, quite apart from the quasi-religious propaganda of Communism, belief in the reality of the moral law is so far decayed in the free society, and its decay has created so widespread a moral vacuum in it, that it must be filled by the very definite imperative of Communism. I have not much doubt that this will happen unless there is a positive rebirth of a religious faith in the free society.

---

**Subscriptions**—12s. 6d. (\$3.00 in U.S.A. and Canada) for one year. 6s. 6d. for six months (Great Britain and Ireland only). Single copies 6d.; reduction for quantities.

**Bound Volumes**—Vols. II—XI (May 1940—Dec. 1946) 8s. 6d. each post free, or 7s. 6d. each in sets of four or more consecutive volumes.

**Indices**—Vols I—XI (Oct. 1939—Dec. 1946), 1s. each post free.

**Folders**—To hold six months' supply, 3s. each post free.

**Groups**—Special rates for group subscriptions may be had on application.

*All communications and subscriptions should be sent to—*  
**THE CHRISTIAN NEWS-LETTER, 20 BALCOMBE STREET, DORSET SQUARE, LONDON, N.W. 1.**

---

Published by Dr. J. H. Oldham for the Christian Frontier Council, and printed in Great Britain by the Church Army Press, Cowley, Oxford.